

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) ~~Molding~~ A molding unit for an extrusion-blow molding machine for articles made of thermoplastic material, of the type in which the molding unit (10) comprises a mold in two parts, each mold-half (12, 14) being borne by a support (16, 18), of the type in which the two supports (16, 18) can be moved relative to each other between an open position in which the two mold-halves (12, 14) are transversely separated from each other to allow the insertion of a parison in a cavity (20) delimited between the two mold-halves (12, 14), and a closed position in which the front faces of the two mold-halves (12, 14) are pressed against each other, and in which the supports (16, 18) are connected to each other by locking means, and of the type in which the molding unit (10) comprises, between at least one of the mold-halves (12) and the associated support (16), fluid pressure compensating means that push the mold-half (12) transversely from a retracted position to an advanced position, toward the other mold-half (14), characterized in that the mold-half (12) has controlled pull-back means (48) for pulling back the mold-half (12) to its retracted position.

2. (Currently Amended) ~~Molding~~ The molding unit according to claim 1, characterized in that the pull-back means comprise an auxiliary inflatable flexible cushion (48).

3. (Currently Amended) ~~Molding~~ The molding unit according to claim 2, characterized in that the pull-back means comprise a bracket (34) that is placed on the outer side of the support (16) and which has, at its two opposite ends, connecting pins (44) that extend through oblong holes (46) made in the side faces (21) of the support to connect to the mold-half (12), and in that the auxiliary cushion (48) is interposed between the bracket (34) and a rear face of the support (16).

4. (Currently Amended) ~~Molding~~ The molding unit according ~~any of the preceding claims~~ to claim 3, characterized in that the fluid pressure compensating means are realized in the form of an inflatable flexible cushion (30) interposed between one rear face of the mold-half (12) and one front face of the associated support (16).

5. (Currently Amended) ~~Molding~~ The molding unit according to claim 4, characterized in that, in transverse projection, the cushion (30) extends in such a way as to cover substantially the entire surface of the transverse projection of the mold-half (12).

6. (Currently Amended) ~~Molding~~ The molding unit according to ~~either of claims 4 or claim 5~~, characterized in that, when the supports (16, 18) are in the closed position, the molding unit (10) is ready for the blow-molding, and in that the inflatable cushion (30) controls the movement of the mold-half (12) from its retracted position to its advanced position after the two supports (16, 18) are locked in the closed position.

7. (Currently Amended) ~~Molding~~ The molding unit according to ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, characterized in that, the mold-halves (12, 14) are furnished with pre-cut means which, when the mold-half (12) is in the advanced position, perform a pre-cut of the parison depending on the contour of the article to be formed.

8. (Currently Amended) ~~Extrusion-blow~~ An extrusion-blow forming machine, characterized in that it comprises at least one molding unit (10) in accordance with ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 1.

9. (New) The molding unit according to claim 1, characterized in that the fluid pressure compensating means are realized in the form of an inflatable flexible cushion (30) interposed between one rear face of the mold-half (12) and one front face of the associated support (16).

10. (New) The molding unit according to claim 1, characterized in that:
the pull-back means comprise an auxiliary inflatable flexible cushion (48); and
the fluid pressure compensating means are realized in the form of an inflatable flexible cushion (30) interposed between one rear face of the mold-half (12) and one front face of the associated support (16).

11. (New) The molding unit according to claim 1, characterized in that:

the fluid pressure compensating means are realized in the form of an inflatable flexible cushion (30) interposed between one rear face of the mold-half (12) and one front face of the associated support (16); and

in transverse projection, the cushion (30) extends in such a way as to cover substantially the entire surface of the transverse projection of the mold-half (12).

12. (New) The molding unit according to claim 1, characterized in that:

the fluid pressure compensating means are realized in the form of an inflatable flexible cushion (30) interposed between one rear face of the mold-half (12) and one front face of the associated support (16); and

when the supports (16, 18) are in the closed position, the molding unit (10) is ready for the blow-molding, and in that the inflatable cushion (30) controls the movement of the mold-half (12) from its retracted position to its advanced position after the two supports (16, 18) are locked in the closed position.

13. (New) The molding unit according to claim 1, characterized in that:

the pull-back means comprise an auxiliary inflatable flexible cushion (48);

the fluid pressure compensating means are realized in the form of an inflatable flexible cushion (30) interposed between one rear face of the mold-half (12) and one front face of the associated support (16); and

in transverse projection, the cushion (30) extends in such a way as to cover substantially the entire surface of the transverse projection of the mold-half (12).

14. (New) The molding unit according to claim 1, characterized in that:

the pull-back means comprise an auxiliary inflatable flexible cushion (48);

the fluid pressure compensating means are realized in the form of an inflatable flexible cushion (30) interposed between one rear face of the mold-half (12) and one front face of the associated support (16); and

when the supports (16, 18) are in the closed position, the molding unit (10) is ready for the blow-molding, and in that the inflatable cushion (30) controls the movement of the mold-half (12) from its retracted position to its advanced position after the two supports (16, 18) are locked in the closed position.

15. (New) The molding unit according to claim 1, characterized in that:

the pull-back means comprise an auxiliary inflatable flexible cushion (48);

the pull-back means comprise a bracket (34) that is placed on the outer side of the support (16) and which has, at its two opposite ends, connecting pins (44) that extend through oblong holes (46) made in the side faces (21) of the support to connect to the mold-half (12), and in that the auxiliary cushion (48) is interposed between the bracket (34) and a rear face of the support (16);

the fluid pressure compensating means are realized in the form of an inflatable flexible cushion (30) interposed between one rear face of the mold-half (12) and one front face of the associated support (16); and

when the supports (16, 18) are in the closed position, the molding unit (10) is ready for the blow-molding, and in that the inflatable cushion (30) controls the movement of the mold-half (12) from its retracted position to its advanced position after the two supports (16, 18) are locked in the closed position.